

Osborne announces retirement

Decision prompted by stress of job

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cessor, as did University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor James Moeser.

The players, too, spoke with confidence concerning Solich.

"When you ask the question of how do you replace arguably the greatest coach of all time in college football," Makovicka said, "that's to get the next greatest coach in college football. And that's Coach Solich. I can guarantee that with Coach Solich leading us, we will keep Nebraska football going."

Osborne was put in nearly the same shoes when he replaced Nebraska legend Bob Devaney in 1973.

At 35, Osborne took over for the man credited with turning Nebraska into one of the elite programs in the nation. Devaney finished 101-20-2 with two national championships.

"I don't think there's any question that the attitude here is still similar to that of Devaney's tenure," Solich said.

Solich, who played fullback under Devaney from 1963-1965, said he, like Osborne, planned to be the team's offensive coordinator.

Though Osborne said he could have stepped back and taken a supervisory role, that wasn't the way he wanted to coach.

Osborne said he didn't think he would be able to keep up his strenuous pace, in which he averaged 14-hour days. And his health, he said, was becoming more of a concern.

After a NU's 77-14 victory over Iowa State Nov. 15, Osborne was hos-



JUST LIKE NEARLY EVERY HOME GAME since Tom Osborne became a Husker assistant coach in 1962, he was surrounded by more than 200 journalists, players and well wishers as he announced his retirement during a press conference Wednesday.

MATT MILLER/DN

pitalized overnight because of concerns about an irregular heartbeat and was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation. Osborne said during his hospitalization he had to be put under and was given an electrical shock.

Osborne said atrial fibrillation can cause strokes and heart attacks and is a condition that likely will show its face again.

"I'm in reasonably good shape," Osborne said. "I'm not going to keel over right in front of you or anything like that."

For now, the Huskers will try to focus on their Orange Bowl matchup with third-ranked Tennessee. The game will put Osborne ahead of "Bear" Bryant's NCAA record for consecutive bowl game appearances with 25.

"The Orange Bowl is going to be pretty emotional," Makovicka said. "We want to go out and go 13-0 and win a national championship for Coach Osborne."



DURING THE PRESS CONFERENCE, Osborne nervously toys with a stack of notes on which he penned his next game plan: "Work harder."

MATT MILLER/DN

Fans prepare for loss of legend

By JOSH FUNK
Assignment Reporter

About 70 Nebraska fans gathered around the big screen television in the Nebraska Union, standing in the aisles and sitting on the floor, to hear NU Football Coach Tom Osborne's retirement announcement Wednesday.

Their faces bore looks of concern and surprise as they smiled somberly at Osborne's humor.

Fans in Lincoln and across the state mourned the loss of one of Nebraska's greatest coaches and the end of an era in Nebraska football.

"NU football won't be the same," said Lee Panko, a freshman veterinary science major.

Following Tuesday's press conference where Osborne dodged the ques-

tion of his retirement, the announcement took fans by surprise Wednesday.

"Nebraska is losing a great man. I have a lot of respect for him," said Marvin Linhorst, a Waco farmer.

Even for those who expected the decision, the timing of the announcement was surprising.

"I saw it coming, but not this soon," Brian Gerbeling, an Elmwood salesman, said. "He's been the coach for my entire lifetime."

Senior music performance major Seth Davis echoed this sentiment.

"It's shocking because he's just always been there since I was a kid," Davis said.

Despite their disappointment, fans understood Osborne's reasons for retiring.

"I am saddened, but I understand why," retired Lincoln resident Walter

Baumann said. "He deserves some time for himself."

Jeremy Wortman, one of the mascots and a senior management and economics major, was saddened by the news.

Osborne has been Nebraska football for years and they can never replace him, Scottsbluff High School Activities Director Derek Deaver said.

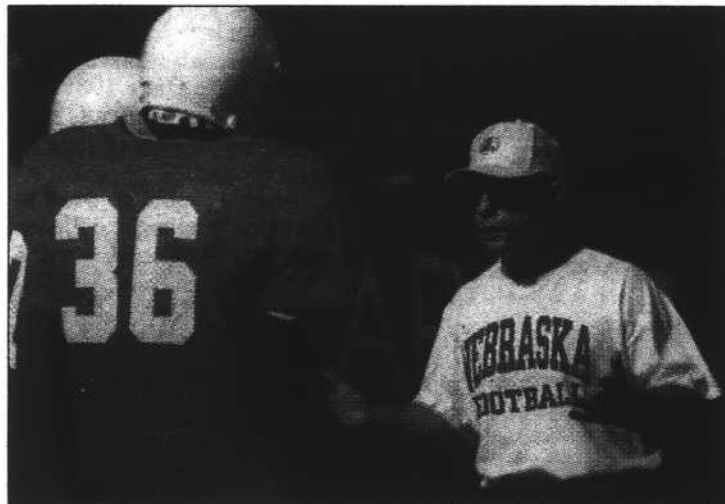
"We'll never replace him, but we thought we could never replace (Bob) Devaney either," Deaver said.

The fans know what they are losing when Osborne leaves.

"Losing him means losing one of the best coaches in the nation," said James Gray, Battle Creek High School's defensive coordinator.

The fans all agreed on Osborne's greatness.

Wortman said, "He has set the standard for all college coaches to follow."



DURING SUMMER practice Nebraska Running Backs Coach Frank Solich instructs freshman I-back Correll Buckhalter on how to run through drills.

MICHAEL WARREN/DN

Solich says few changes should be expected at NU

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schools to be the head coach, said he would have been content to spend the rest of his career at Nebraska as the assistant to Osborne and have been "totally happy."

"I did feel I wanted to be a head coach and run a program," Solich said.

Offensive lineman Matt Hoskinson said Solich knows Nebraska's offense inside and out. In fact, Solich was a part of this offense as a fullback for Coach Bob Devaney in the mid-1960s. He's remembered as one of the smallest (under 160 pounds), yet toughest backs in NU history.

Solich held NU's single game rushing record for more than 10

years and still holds the Orange Bowl record for return yardage in a game with 166 in 1966. As a coach, he's fielded at least one all-conference running back in 12 of the 14 seasons he's been the running backs coach.

"The biggest drop off will be — look at Coach Osborne and look at Coach Solich," senior captain Vershan Jackson said, joking of the change in stature between the 5-foot-8 Solich and the 6-foot-3 Osborne.

Joel Makovicka, a fullback who has played under Solich for the past three years, also expressed confidence in the new coach.

"With Coach Solich leading us, we're going to keep Nebraska going."

The
Osborne era